

to exceed \$250, the FOIA Disclosure Officer shall notify the requester of the likely cost and: if the requester has a history of prompt payment of FOIA charges, obtain satisfactory assurance of full payment; or if the requester has no history of payment, require an advance payment of an amount up to the full estimated charge. If the requester has previously failed to pay a fee within 30 days of the date of billing, the FOIA Disclosure Officer shall require the requester to pay the full amount owed plus any interest owed as provided in paragraph (h) of this section or demonstrate that he or she has, in fact, paid the fee, and to make an advance payment of the full amount of the estimated charges before the FOIA Disclosure Officer begins to process the new request or a pending request from that requester.

(g) *Fees for services not required by the Freedom of Information Act.* The Commission has discretion regarding its response to requests for services not required by the FOIA. For example, the FOIA does not require agencies to certify or authenticate responsive documents, nor does it require responsive documents to be sent by express mail. If these services are requested, the FOIA Disclosure Officer shall assess the direct costs of such services.

(h) *Interest on unpaid bills.* The Commission's Office of Administration shall begin assessing interest charges on unpaid bills starting on the thirty-first day after the date the bill was sent. Interest will accrue from the date of billing until the Commission receives full payment. Interest will be at the rate described in 31 U.S.C. 3717.

(i) *Debt collection procedures.* If bills are unpaid 60 days after the mailing of a written notice to the requester, the Commission's Office of Administration may resort to the debt collection procedures set out in the Debt Collection Act of 1982 (Pub. L. 97-365, 96 Stat. 1749), as amended, and its administrative procedures, including the use of consumer reporting agencies, collection agencies, and offset.

[71 FR 56350, Sept. 27, 2006, as amended at 75 FR 41372, July 16, 2010]

§ 2201.8 Waiver of fees.

(a) *General.* The FOIA Disclosure Officer shall waive part or all of the fees assessed under § 2201.7(b) if two conditions are satisfied: Disclosure of the information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government; and disclosure is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester. Where the FOIA Disclosure Officer has reasonable cause to doubt the use to which a requester will put the records sought, or where that use is not clear from the request itself, the FOIA Disclosure Officer may seek clarification from the requester before assigning the request to a specific category for fee assessment purposes. The FOIA Disclosure Officer shall afford the requester the opportunity to show that the requester comes within these two conditions. The following factors may be considered in determining whether the two conditions are satisfied:

(1) Whether the subject of the requested records concerns the operations or activities of the government;

(2) Whether the disclosure is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of government operations or activities;

(3) Whether the requester has a commercial interest that would be furthered by the requested disclosure; and, if so, whether the magnitude of the identified commercial interest of the requester is sufficiently large, in comparison with the public interest in disclosure, that disclosure is primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.

(b) *Partial waiver of fees.* If the two conditions stated in paragraph (a) of this section are met, the FOIA Disclosure Officer will ordinarily waive all fees. In exceptional cases, however, only a partial waiver may be granted if the request for records would impose an exceptional burden or require an exceptional expenditure of Commission resources, and the request for a waiver minimally satisfies the "public interest" requirement in paragraph (a) of this section.